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FBI Story Planting Tied to Fired Editor

NASHVILLE, May 13 (AP)—The publisher of The Nashville Tennessean said Wednesday that the FBI attempted to get a story published in the newspaper through a copy editor who was fired last week because of an alleged "special relationship" with the agency.

Publisher John Seigenthaler said at a news conference that former copy editor Jacque Srouji reported to an FBI "control agent" while employed by The Tennessean.

"It is now our belief that on one specific occasion within very recent weeks, someone associated with the FBI sought to use the relationship with her to have us publish in the Tennessean a news story that served the narrow interests of the agent or agents who provided her with leads to develop the story.

"The story was never published primarily because I suspected we were being used," he said. He declined to say what the story was about.

Seigenthaler, who was a special investigator with the Justice Department under the late Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, said Srouji had possession of highly sensitive FBI documents. He declined to elaborate except to say, "I have never known any citizen to have access to information as sensitive as she had."

Srouji has been unavailable for comemnt since Friday, when it was disclosed she had been fired for what Seigenthaler called "past and recent conversations with the FBI."

"She acknowledged to me last Tuesday and Wednesday that the FBI asked her, while she was reporting to them about other matters, about at least two members of this newspaper's staff," Seigenthaler said.

"She acknowledged to me that the questions when they were raised startled her and that she worried about why they had been asked. She said she reported only favorable things to the FBI about these staff members, but the fact that the questions were raised and she was in a position to respond to them led me to determine that it was not wise in the interest of the people who work here to continue her association with this newspaper."

staffers or discuss the questions raised about them.

Asked if Srouji was paid for her work with the bureau, Seigenthaler said, "She told me that on one occasion the FBI did pay her to make a trip to attend a meeting in Michigan" when she worked for the Nashville Banner under its prior management. He did not know the purpose of the trip.

He said Srouji provided the newspaper with copies of FBI documents that related to newspaper stories and with inside information on several FBI criminal investigations.

U.S. to Provide Private Lawyers For 2 FBI Agents

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United Press International

The Justice Department has agreed to provide private lawyers for two FBI agents being sued for alleged FBI burglaries of the Socialist Workers Party headquarters.

Agents Arthur J. Greene Jr. and George P. Baxtrum Jr. were named as defendants in a damage suit after their names appeared in FBI records the party obtained under court orders.

Spokesman Robert J. Havel said Wednesday the Justice Department normally directly defends federal employees who are sued for their official actions but provides private lawyers for officials it conceivably may later prosecute on criminal charges.

Deputy Attorney General Harold R. Tyler Jr. decided to hire private defense lawyers for Greene and Baxtrum in the private damage suit in order to avoid a possible future conflict of interest, Havel said.